

THIS WEEK IN AGRICULTURE

News briefs from and about Idaho's agricultural industry

May 15-21, 2005

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Governor, Director launch first trade mission of 2005

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and Idaho Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi are enroute to Asia for the first trade mission of 2005. Kempthorne is leading a delegation of 23 Idaho companies and organizations for the two-week trip that begins on Saturday.

Others participating in the trade mission include Rupert Sen. Dean Cameron and Commerce and Labor Director Roger Madsen.

"These trade missions are very important to Idaho agriculture where we export nearly one-third of our food and agriculture products," Director Takasugi said. "They give us the opportunity to address trade issues with government officials and open doors with higher level officials and executives that companies would not have access to on their own."

The trade missions have been underway since 1999. They have been highly successful for Idaho agriculture, delivering more than \$11 million in export sales and creating new markets for Idaho products.

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For example, in 2001, the governor met with Grupo Modelo of Mexico, makers of Corona Beer. As a direct result of the trade mission Grupo has invested in a multi-million dollar malting plant in eastern Idaho. The facility will utilize nearly six million bushels of malting barley from up to 58,000 acres to produce 6.4 million bushels of malt. The trade-mission-generated project will yield \$17 million in annual barley sales.

Said Kempthorne, "Expanding trade opportunities and finding new markets for Idaho products and services has and will continue to be an important component of our state's vibrant economy. The Asian countries reflect some of the top export markets for Idaho and offer unprecedented new business opportunities for Idaho companies."

The trade mission is Kempthorne's seventh since taking office, his third to Asia. The governor plans another trade mission this October, which will take an Idaho delegation to Mexico.

For more information contact Wayne Hoffman at (208)332-8671

New Seed Indemnity Fund reaches \$1 million mark

The new Seed Indemnity Fund has now topped \$1 million, Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi has announced. "Idaho has a great program for the seed industry and it is the only state that has two indemnity funds," Takasugi said. "Idaho leads the nation in producer protection, not only with the Seed Indemnity Fund, but with the Commodity Indemnity Fund as well."

Seed buyers are licensed and regulated by the department's Warehouse Control Program. Buyers purchase a wide variety of seed crops such as wheat, beans, peas, alfalfa, grass, vegetable and a number of other diverse seed crops grown in Idaho.

The Legislature created the seed fund in July 2002 to protect Idaho producers in the event of a seed buyer failure. The fund is supported by the producer's assessments and allows producers to recoup 90 percent of their approved verified claims in the event of a failure. Currently the Seed Indemnity Fund has not had failure any claims filed against it.

For more information contact Wayne Hoffman at (208)332-8671

Veteran journalist Joins Department of Agriculture

Idaho Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi announced today that he has hired Wayne Hoffman as his special assistant and department public information officer.

"Wayne shares my vision for promoting agriculture's vital role in the state's economy," Director Takasugi said. "What's more, Wayne understands the issues facing agriculture as Idaho continues to grow. He will be a champion for the department, Idaho consumers, farmers and ranchers."

Hoffman has 18 years of journalism experience, including radio, television and print.

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He comes to the department from the Idaho Statesman, where he worked as a state government reporter. Before that, he worked for the Idaho Press-Tribune in Nampa, where he also covered state government issues. Hoffman has been observing the Legislature, the governor's office and state agencies, as well as farm issues in Idaho since he moved here in 1995.

"Wayne's relationship with lawmakers, the governor's office is second to none," Director Takasugi said. "He comes to us with a great reputation, built on his experience in journalism and at the Statehouse, and those attributes will serve him and this department well."

As a special assistant to the director, Hoffman will represent the agency and the director in the formulation of policies. As a public information officer, Hoffman will work with members of the news media and the public in communicating the agency's message.

Wayne earned his Bachelor's degree in communications from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro in 1994. He and his wife Kimberly live in Nampa. They have two children, Kira, 7 and Julian, 4.

Administration releases new economic outlook

A new forecast from the Kempthorne administration expects the state's economy to grow at a slightly better rate than it was forecasting in January. Of major concern, the economists note, is the expectation that Idaho will undergo another year of drought.

"While this issue is far from settled, agriculture experts at the University of Idaho believe the water issues will have more impact on the composition of Idaho agriculture than the monetary value of output," the governor's economists write in their report. "Put simply, high valued uses are expected to find the water needed to operate."

But the economists, Derek Santos and Michael Ferguson, also note that food processing "appears to be starting a new chapter in its long and rich history."

"This will be a welcome change from the string of job losses it has suffered in recent years," the report says. The food processing industry is benefiting from the growing dairy industry, with the size of the state's dairy herd nearly double what it was in 1994. Milk production has likewise doubled.

For more information contact Wayne Hoffman at (208)332-8671

Idaho Barley Commission sets quarterly meeting

The Idaho Barley Commission has set its quarterly meeting for 9 a.m., Tuesday, May 24 at the Ameritel Inn in Pocatello. All barley growers and the general public are invited to attend. Assistance is available for the hearing impaired or handicapped.

For more information, contact Kelly Olson at 334-2090.

ISDA issues crisis exemption for Warrior insecticide

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has issued a crisis exemption for the use of Warrior pesticide to control aphids, cereal leaf beetles, cutworms and armyworms on the 2005 Idaho barley crop. The crisis exemption has been in effect since May 5 and continues through July 30. The department issued the exemption in response to pest concerns that could lead to severe economic losses to the state's barley crop, particularly in earlier emerging barley fields in the Magic Valley.

The Idaho Barley Commission had applied to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its eighth consecutive Section 18 application. The EPA has not yet approved the Section 18 application, and so the Department of Agriculture stepped in.

"Barley is a \$170 million industry in Idaho," Clark Kauffman, chairman of the Idaho Barley Commission and a barley producer from Filer, said in a news release from the commission. "Our producers cannot afford to be without effective crop protection tools. We appreciate the quick action of our state Department of Agriculture to address these pest control needs."

Two applications of the pesticide are allowed per growing season. A copy of the label can be obtained from the ISDA website at

www.agri.idaho.gov/Categories/Pesticides/registration/Section18.php.

For more information contact Wayne Hoffman at (208)332-8671

Sign up for FSA by June 1 to avoid late fees

Idaho producers intending to participate in the Farm Service Agency 2005 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) should enroll their farms before June 1, according to the Idaho State Farm Service Agency. Doing so will avoid a \$100 late-filing fee, said Wayne Hammon, the state executive director for the agency. Producers who do not file before June 1 have until Sept. 30 to get signatures and pay the \$100 fee to remain eligible for the 2005 program.

"The DCP program requires contracts be signed every year," Hammon said. "It's important for our producers to be aware of this annual requirement and save 100 bucks by filing before June 1 of each year."

Applications submitted between June 1 and Sept. 30, along with a \$100 late fee, will be accepted. But after Sept. 30, no producer can sign up for the 2005 DCP program and payments. Producers remain eligible for the 2006 program, if they decide to participate.

Under the program, producers receive a direct payment based on their historic crop acreage base and yield for eligible commodities. Producers can elect to receive their direct payment in two installments once they sign their DCP contract and have all other required eligibility forms and 2005 rental agreements, if applicable, on file.

Contact Becky Rios at (208) 378-5667

ISDA Marketing Division calendar

May 21-24: National Restaurant Association (NRA) Food Show: Chicago, IL

June: Buying Mission – Chinese buyers tour orchards, packing and distribution facilities in the Northwest including Idaho.

July: Chef Demonstrations on Mexican Cooking Show - Monterrey, Mexico.
The Colorado Department of Agriculture and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture work on cooking Shows that showcase Western United States products.

This Week in Agriculture is a publication of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. To contribute items to the newsletter, or for more information, contact

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The deadline to submit all articles is 10 am Thursday